

REMARKS

Introduction

Claims 1 - 14 were originally pending in this application. Claim 2 has been canceled. Claims 1, 3, 11, and 12 have been amended. Thus, claims 1 and 3 – 14 remain pending for consideration in the application. No new matter has been added.

Priority

The Examiner noted that a certified copy of the European application had not been filed in this case. Accordingly, a certified copy of the European application has been submitted along with this amendment.

Claim Objections

Claims 11 and 12 were objected to because it appears that these claims directed to the tapered flanks should depend from claim 10 rather than claim 1. Accordingly, each of claims 11 and 12 has been amended to change their dependency to claim 10.

Claim Rejections

35 U.S.C. § 112

Claim 3 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, ¶ 2 as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter that applicants regards as the invention. More specifically, line 1 of claim 3 recites the limitation “the outer surface area,” for which the Examiner states there is insufficient antecedent basis. Accordingly, claim 3 has been amended to address this issue by reciting the limitation “an outer surface area” in lines 1 - 2 of this claim.

35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 1, 4 – 6, and 10 - 13 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by the Gaggermeier '708 patent. A claim is said to be anticipated where each and every limitation of the claim can be found in a single prior-art reference. Applicants respectfully traverse these rejections.

On the other hand, Examiner noted that while certain claims were objected to, they would be allowable if rewritten in independent form, including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. With Examiner's suggestion in mind, independent claim 1 has been amended to include the limitations of dependent claim 2. Claim 2 has been canceled.

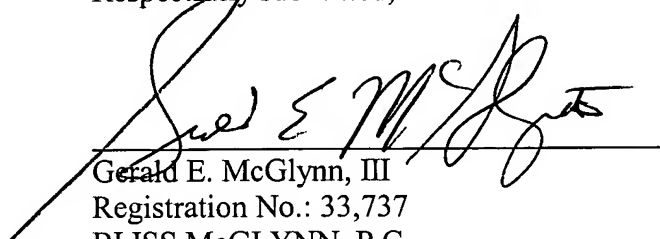
Applicants respectfully submit that independent claim 1 recites structure that is not disclosed or suggested by the prior art and is patentably distinguishable from the subject matter of the references of record in this case. Claims 3 - 14 are all ultimately dependent upon independent claim 1 and add further perfecting limitations. Accordingly, applicants respectfully request that the rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) and § 112, ¶ 2 be withdrawn.

In view of the amendments to the claims, it is respectfully submitted that the prior-art references, in combination or each reference standing alone, do not suggest the subject invention as defined in these claims. However, even if they did, they could only be applied through hindsight after restructuring the disclosures of the prior art in view of applicants' invention. A combination of the prior art to derive applicants' invention would, in and of itself, be an invention.

Conclusion

Applicants respectfully submit that the claims clearly distinguish over the prior art and are, therefore, allowable. Accordingly, applicants respectfully solicit allowance of the claims pending in this case.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gerald E. McGlynn, III", is written over a horizontal line.

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